



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

GAMES

It appears from Herodotus the Halicarnassian that Cyrus the Persian was on the whole a gentleman, and that Crœsus the Lydian, was technically speaking, "a character"; so that to call a man a Crœsus and mean nothing but his riches is to neglect the better parts of Crœsus, namely his wit and humanity, as well as the interesting precipitancy of his fortunes. Furthermore it appears that the Lydians were an engaging and peculiar people; for when in the days of Atys, the son of Manes, there was great scarcity through the whole land of Lydia, they bore the affliction patiently until, finding it did not pass away, they set themselves to devise remedies. Various expedients were discovered, such as dice, hucklebones, and handball; and many games were invented, except tables, which they do not claim as their own. At last this method in the treatment of famine was adopted; namely, to engage in games on one day so entirely as not to feel any craving for food, and the next day to eat and abstain from games. In this manner they passed eighteen years. Yet the affliction continued, and eventually part of the people were obliged to emigrate. Would that they had emigrated to America! Fortunate Cyrus, so successful and yet a gentleman! Fortunate Crœsus, so fallen and yet more interesting as a man than as a moral! Fortunate Lydians, practical yet unexpected, stoical yet with gaiety, lovers of games, sportsmen and good losers, who crowned their ill luck with laurel!

But indeed the Lydians did not "invent" dice and hucklebones and handball, any more than the Athenians invented tragedy, however much by genius and subtle knowledge of the qualities of games they may have improved them. Games are not invented, but developed. The Elizabethan boy, who cried "Ducdame!" to call fools into a circle, proved the antiquity of his sport by the Latin of his invitation [*duc ad me*], and in my time of such pleasures that same taboo, or touch-and-immunity, game was called "Kingsland," which name in similar fashion harks back to the past. The king's land is taboo ground. You step on it at your peril. It is occupied by a fleet-

footed infection, who cannot go out of it but who invites you inside to disaster, who is bewitched and will pass the bad "medicine" or virulent bacilli on to you if he can.

Games are growths. And like all growths they admit of classification, and are subject to the laws and influences of evolution. They have their orders, families, and species, their conservation and variation of type. The variations are often new and arise within our own memories and observations, but the species are generally old, and the orders prehistoric.

Morley's Universal Library is a useful collection, but Henry Morley was a slovenly editor. In the "Popular Songs of Ireland" of that collection, in the prefatory note to "The Victorious Goalers," it is said that "Hurling, or Goal, a favorite Irish game, which has been called by Mr. Arthur Young 'the cricket of savages,' resembles the Scotch game of golf"; whereas the description following shows that "hurling, or goal," has no resemblance to either cricket or golf, except that in all three one hits a ball with a stick. "Hurling, or goal," is the game which the American boy calls shinny, which game, regulated and ordered, and played on smooth lawn, or ice, or roller rink, becomes hockey; or on horseback, polo. Lacrosse is the same game in principle, the ball being thrown with a net instead of driven with a mallet. Football, basket-ball, and push-ball (but not baseball) are the same game, with the differences that arise from a different kind of ball, large and inflated instead of small and solid, differently propelled. The essential is the same. But golf belongs to the same family as croquet; the holes correspond to the wickets, and the last hole to the stake. A third game family includes bowling, quoits, shuffle-board, and curling, also collaterally ringtoss, and even marbles and "nigger baby." Cricket — and baseball more distantly — seems related to duck-on-the-rock, constituting a fourth game family.

The principle of the shinny family consists in having two groups of contestants trying to drive a ball or puck through or over one or two opposing goals or lines. The principle of the quoit or shuffle-board family is throwing or propelling something at a mark from a fixed position or distance, and so it is connected with all target shooting. Indeed, the shinny type includes a

kind of target shooting, but it is dynamic, a contest of speed, shifting and kaleidoscopic, while the quoit or target family is static and deliberate. The latter relates back rather to hunting, the former to war. The principle of duck-on-the-rock, cricket, "two-old-cat," and baseball is that, when the ball is struck or the duck knocked off, you run for the base, wicket, or refuge, and are caught if the ball arrives, or the duck is replaced and yourself touched, before you arrive. Even in baseball you have to be touched to be "out" unless you are "forced off." These are touch-immunity-and-refuge games, and so connected with "tag" and "Kingsland." The immunity is a species of taboo.

"Counting out rhymes" are echoes of old incantations for the determination of guilt, or where a victim was needed. Each child on whom the last syllable falls of —

Eeny meeny miny mo,
Cracky feeny finy fo,
Rip jip ban jo,—

or whatever the variant,—is set free; and when all but one have been freed, this one, at whom fortune has pointed her relentless finger, is "it." To be "it" in the game that follows is generally an unenviable distinction, from which the victim makes all effort to escape by touching someone else and passing on the infection of his ill luck. In Madagascar the word for "it" is "boca," which means "leper."

Fortune dwells in the region of the incalculable and loses her divinity whenever her mystery is penetrated. The "eeny meeny" formula contains twelve words or counts, and its appeal to fortune would seem specious, and the victim easily pre-determinable by the counter. But to any tribe which could not count, the mystery would be as impregnable as death; and indeed it does not come to my recollections of childhood that we ever attempted to violate the sanctity of chance, or that such a possibility ever occurred to us, although to count twelve must have been well within our capacities.

The great family of "luck" games — dice and roulette, guessing games, luck and calculation games with fingers (*mora*) or shuffled cards — have always been the gambling games *par excellence*. As to why men will bet more readily on chance than on

strength and skill, it may be—it was Mrs. Battle's opinion—that an unemphasized issue of chance is felt to lack value and weight. The issue of strength and skill may be sufficient in itself, but roulette or rouge-et-noir without stakes is Fortune weighing "the picture of nothing" in her scales. When important questions of life or death were determined by drawing lots, when the decision was supposed to be made by superhuman powers, and the auguries and omens were messages from the gods, the stakes were heavy and the situation impressive. When a penny is tossed for the right to choose first, that right is the stake. But drawing lots or tossing pennies as a game is a savorless game if it ends there.

The analysis of "luck" and "immunity" takes us into a world of ideas, strange yet interwoven with the substance of our most familiar feelings; into the haunted twilight land of half-awakened consciousness, where there is no line drawn between natural and supernatural, matter and spirit, man and beast, or death and life; where an "evil eye" is as poisonous as a serpent's fang, and the invisible fear as vivid as the spear of the foe.

How much the infection and contagion of disease, the traveling pest and spreading epidemic, may have had to do by analogy with the conveyability of all evil and good, is a speculative question. Primitive man could see that disease often appeared to pass from one person to another. Two analogous facts are like positive and negative poles, brought near enough together for the electric imagination to jump the space between and pronounce them related if not the same. To the primitive mind likeness implies, if not identity, at least an influential relation. If you make a wax image of a man and melt it, he will be melted too; either because the image and the man are somehow the same, or because the resemblance is somehow a bond. In an animistic atmosphere, being infected and being bewitched are naturally the same conceptions. If a man steps on forbidden ground and is afterwards gored by a buffalo, or drinks of a stream and has a fever, it is the same sort of thing. Something invisible but real has passed into or been attached to him. A touch may kill or cure. A touch may get rid of ill luck by passing it on to another party. A formula of words may give a man indigestion,

or cause his dog to run away. Our own feelings toward blessings and curses, good wishes and bad wishes, probably contain in their complex compositions some elements born of a time when evil and good were conceived of as attachable and detachable commodities. Every object was animate and capable of effective enmity or friendship, capable of giving out a beneficial or injurious something called good or ill luck; possibly a spirit that could separate itself from the material and follow far, as the spirit of man goes forth and travels in his dreams; possibly something like the smell of garlic which clings to the hand persistently, but from which one may be purified, if he knows how. Whoever is contaminated by "it," is "it." His business is to get rid of "it," and be it no more, and take every precaution not to catch the slippery something again. For "it" is usually evil; at least, one accepts a good thing and thinks no more about it, but an evil thing cannot be forgotten while it lasts. Most magic is protective, because a good "it" is hardly noticeable.

If a whole tribe seemed infected, it might be possible to collect and deposit all the "itness" in one person, man or beast; and kill, or drive him out into the wilderness, to carry with him all the "itness" of the tribe. This was the sacrifice or scapegoat, the one who bore the ills of all, the most pathetic figure in the dark backward and abysm of humanity. "Itness" was a very ticklish thing, and a man or community could not be too careful about it. It might be violent or mild. It might be cumulative or it might not. The man who bore the ills of all was somehow both holy and accursed, both revered and then outcast, both respected and kept away from. He was "it."

Among savages the winners of a "tug of war" win good fortune for those they represent; and semi-civilized Moors, Hindoos, and Philippinos tug for more than the bubble of reputation. Where easternly winds are rainy, the success of those who tug to the East brings rain. Some tribes tug by sexes for a successful harvest. Wherever "sacred games" of contest are held by a community, it would seem safe to assume that the one side represented good fortune and the other ill fortune. But the assumption is not altogether safe.

Generation after generation of schoolboys plodding through

Virgil have paused, with a flicker of interest, to wonder at the funeral games in honor of the dead, and to think it a peculiar kind of funeral,—attractive but peculiar. What has a horse race to do with an obsequy? How is a boxing match an honor to the dead?

Such funeral customs are common with contemporary savages, as well as with the Greeks and Romans, and even occur among European peasants of to-day. Frazer gives pages of instances, but is tentative in theory. Were funeral games originally contests to determine inheritance? The Eleusinian Games were a harvest festival to Demeter and Persephone. Were they contests for good luck, like the "tug of war"? Probably the Olympian Games were commemorative in origin. But why games? The "Games" were religious celebrations which sometimes developed or degenerated into "Fairs." Hence horse races at "Fairs." But games are exciting, entertaining, and suitable to "Fairs"; possibly they determine good or ill luck; but how do they honor the dead? At any rate, it was once widely believed that, if you want to show respect to the memory of one lately distinguished, you may make speeches or put up a monument, but the altogether right thing to do is to hold series of races and prize fights.

Races and stationary target games and their derivatives are perhaps mainly of hunting origin; and all the shinny and football family, as well as boxing and tugging, seem modifications of weaponed war. That they once were also symbols of hunting and war, more or less ceremonial and ritualistic, is suggested by what has appeared regarding "sacred games." The strange power of a resemblance over the primitive imagination—the belief that likeness is a controlling relation approaching identity, that a symbol or imitation somehow grips and drags after it the thing symbolized and imitated—may have much to do, not only with the power of symbols in our own mental processes, but also with the origin of all these regulated and imitative contests. If so,—while the Eleusinian Games were presumably good-luck contests before harvest,—the Olympian Games originally, and all funeral games in general, would seem to have been commemorative, because imitative, and hence powerfully related to the dead

warrior's activities. That they sometimes involved a contest for his property is undeniable, but in so far as they were held in honor of the dead they referred to his prowess. Possibly they would benefit his ghost; possibly they would project prowess after him to his shadowy hunts and spirit battles. At any rate they seemed to our forefathers the best manner of saying beside his grave: "He was a good hunter, swift with his feet. He was a mighty warrior, strong with his hands."

ARTHUR COLTON.

New York City.